

THE BLACK MAGIC

BY MICHAEL WHITE

WHY the young Rani, or Queen, of Rangur had taken to such modern ideas as lighting her palace with electricity, was a question that at the outset did not concern Foster. His business was to proceed with the necessary machinery and all despatch from New York to Rangur and set up the plant. Beyond that it did not occur to him to search for an ulterior motive, particularly as he found on arrival that local conditions for the work were more favorable than he anticipated. Sufficient water power to drive the generators was hurled over a precipice at a spot about three miles up a creek from the palace, and, considering what he had heard about the ways of the Orient, there seemed to be a surprising eagerness to get the job completed, at least on the part of the Rani. That in itself might have been regarded as curious, if not suspicious.

Foster, of course, was not introduced or presented to the young Rani in any accidental fashion; but carried on conversations with her separated by a curtain. That stirred his interest, because, when the voice of an unseen speaker is musical and strongly touched with appeal, your nostrils catch whiffs of a delicate perfume, and any sudden gesture produces a silvery clash of amulets and bangles, much may be imagined. From thus wondering what she might be like personally, he was moved to make inquiries regarding her position, residing, as she did, in a rambling pile of courts, galleries, halls, and passages, half palace and half medieval fortress.

Her past, at any rate, appeared to be no secret. When a child she had been married to the Raja of Rangur; but had entered the palace only a few weeks before his death. Whether her lamentations on that occasion were sincere might have been open to doubt, because from all accounts his Highness was about as brutal and dissolute an old Prince as was to be met with in India. It was vaguely hinted that some surprising things might be told of the late Raja; but for some unexplained reason at that point the native mind preferred to remain silent. In any case, at the Raja's death the young Rani was proclaimed Regent pending the majority of the next heir. All this happened about a year before Foster appeared on the scene to set up his electric light plant, and developments of the situation took place soon after the generators were in working order.

FOSTER had reported progress to the Rani's evident satisfaction at a usual morning audience, when her gray bearded, black robed *munshi* (secretary) drew him into an antechamber with an air of apprehension. For some moments the secretary paced up and down the shaded room, apparently undecided how to open the conversation. Now and then his eyes roved the curiously decorated walls as if he expected one of the grotesquely painted figures to stride forth in bodily form.

Foster was of a fairly practical build of mind and, as this story shows, certainly not without all needful courage; but he generally breathed less freely inside the Rani's grim palace. It is not pleasant to open a door expecting to pass out into a sunlit court and in place of it finding yourself peering down a black hole. At last the *munshi* paused and gravely addressed Foster.

"The American Sahib is surely a man of honor. All the people speak well of him; therefore what I have to say he will not whisper again into any ear?"

"Surely!" replied Foster with a nod of encouragement. "Go ahead, *Munshi*. What you confide I'll hold down if it's before a full bench of the Supreme Court of the country."

The secretary inclined his head as if he expected as much, moved a pace nearer, and spoke in a tone of confidence. "You must know that the Rani is in great trouble."

"Sorry to hear that," interposed Foster, who felt attracted in an unusual way toward the young Queen, with whom he conversed but never set eyes on. "Don't overlook anything I can do to help."

"You may have heard," went on the old *munshi*, "that her husband, the late Raja, was a very wicked man."

"Yes, something of that sort," Foster acquiesced. The other gazed reflectively through his gold rimmed spectacles, choosing his words with care. "Everyone knows that the Raja—" The *munshi*



THE GIFT OF THE BRACELET

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—The Black Magic is so much dreaded by the natives of India that they do not care to speak of it, and I have heard Anglo-Indians relate unpleasant experiences in regard to it for which they could give no explanation. Regarding the Rajput custom of the "Gift of the Bracelet," the late Queen Victoria sent her bracelet to General Sir Partab Singh, a Rajput Prince. In return he sent her a jewel which she wore on great state occasions. The custom goes back to the days of plumed and mail-clad Rajput chivalry, when any Rajput Queen by sending her bracelet to a noble could attach him to her service. By accepting her bracelet he bound himself to defend her honor and possessions without any thought of recompense. In fact, according to the custom, marriage between the two was prohibited, and a Knight of the Bracelet was permitted only on an occasion of special achievement to see the face of the woman to whom he vowed his deeds of valor, reflected in a mirror. The order was instituted to preserve a chivalrous ideal among the Rajputs.

checked himself at mentioning the deceased Raja by name. "Everyone knows that he ate up the land with taxes, beat his servants without just cause, and many people died suddenly of cholera."

He raised his bushy eyebrows slightly as he laid a momentary emphasis on the last word.

"That certainly seems to have been a pretty bad record," remarked Foster, who understood that death by powdered glass taken internally with your dinner may pass in an emergency for cholera.

"Yes, Sahib, and had not the Raja fallen soon after the Rani was brought to the palace, she might have died of the cholera also. It was so with the former Raja. The Raja was a very jealous man, Sahib."

"The deuce he was!" ejaculated Foster. "I should call him an incarnate devil!"

At Foster's unpremeditated reference to the Evil One, the *munshi* started and trembled perceptibly. "But with his last breath," he passed on quickly, "the Raja vowed that if she ever thought of another man he would return and devour her. He ordered that she be secretly immolated on his funeral pyre; but the English Sahibs heard and prevented it."

"That's one chalkmark to their credit, anyway," said Foster decisively. Then after a short pause, "But since the old sinner is dead—"

"Sahib," interposed the *munshi* with faltering accents as if fearful of the words he uttered, "but the Raja leagued himself with the Black Magic, and in witness of it the devil set a burnt scar upon his forehead."

"Aye!" ejaculated Foster.

"Yes, that was how it was. The Black Magic will help the Raja to come back and keep his oath, Sahib. The Raja knows that the Rani has set her heart upon a young man, a Prince of excellent qualities. Of that there is no doubt, because the Rani's astrologer has divined his evil intention. Sahib, the Raja may return now at any time!"

As he ceased speaking the *munshi* glanced uneasily over his shoulder toward the unoccupied throne in a hall beyond, upon which the Raja sat at morning audience.

IN Foster's mind the thing, of course, was absurd, worthy almost of being tossed aside with mirth; but during his comparatively short residence in Rangur he had learned how deep seated were the superstitions and prejudices of a people maintaining a few thousand years' old civilization. Therefore he decided to treat the matter seriously and bring modern reason to bear on the situation.

"Well," he said at last, "if the astrologer has been able to make out all that, why doesn't he do something to sidetrack the Raja's ghost, or whatever it is?"

"The astrologer cannot prevent the Raja's coming back," replied the *munshi*. "The Black Magic is far more powerful than the astrologer. The Raja will keep his oath. He will return. But, Sahib, the Rani believes that you can overcome the Black Magic and kill the evil spirit of the Raja."

"What! I?" gasped Foster with astonishment.

"Yes, with your lightning wires," returned the *munshi*. "The Rani has heard how powerful the American Sahibs are with their lightning wires; that they travel by them and kill malefactors in a second by a mere raising of the hand. If the Raja should come again and sit on the throne, as the astrologer predicts, the Rani believes you will be able to drive him away. That is why she has brought you to Rangur. Upon you, therefore, depends the happiness of the Rani. Whatever you ask for this service the Rani will think it a small recompense."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" ejaculated Foster.

AT first thought he was inclined to resent being brought all the way from the United States with heavy machinery for the purpose of scaring away the ghost of an iniquitous old Raja; but, realizing how serious the matter was to the Rani, that a romance was bound up with it which ought to be above every other consideration, and that probably the astrologer or some Brahman was fattening mightily on the evident reign of terror inaugurated, he decided to stand by the Rani as far as his ability went. To that end he judged the first thing to do was to reassure her and prepare for whatever ghost trick the astrologer might perpetrate. On the whole he was suspicious of the astrologer.

"All right," he said. "You tell the Rani not to worry at all; but to go right ahead with her love affair in spite of the old Raja's oath, the Black Magic, or anything the astrologer may say about her husband coming back. I'll have a wire up into the palace in a few days, and then if the Raja's ghost does stalk around I know a few tricks that ought to scare it away. Never laid a wire for a ghost before; but if it comes in the way of business I guess I can put up as good a showing as the Black Magic."

The *munshi* profusely expressed his great relief, declared the whole earth was honored in being the abode of the American Sahib, and accompanied Foster to the court where his sice was waiting with his pony.

As Foster cantered off to his camp near the powerhouse, he smiled rather grimly at the thought of what might happen to the astrologer if that worthy elected to act the part of the Raja's ghost. In that event, when the line was run into the palace, the chances were that the astrologer would go swiftly out of the prophecy business.

Foster had fixed his camp in a compound some hundreds of yards from the powerhouse in order to escape from the insect pests that swarmed about the nullah. Between the camp and the powerhouse stretched a belt of jungle. This was penetrated by a path, which, passing the powerhouse, led on up the nullah to a small temple dedicated to the jungle god.

WHETHER it was that Foster had overlooked paying any special attention to the jungle god, or that there was something in the Rani's predicament after all, it is difficult to answer; but in any case that happened which has left a doubt in Foster's mind regarding the Black Magic. Foster had returned from the palace and was lying in a cane chair in the shade of his tent porch, undergoing the process of having his boots pulled off, when his body servant, Durga Deb, looked up with a grave face.

"Sahib," he said, "there is bad news!" "What's the trouble now?" demanded Foster, as he lit a cheroot. "Has another coolie's grandmother gone sick in order that he may draw pay without work?"

"No, Sahib; but the priest at the Jungle Temple

says that a ghost tiger has come into the district. That is very bad, Sahib. So if the heavenborn pleases it would be wise to make some offering to the priest. He is a very holy man, Sahib, and with much power over the jungle animals."

"Not on your life!" cried Foster, energetically kicking off a boot. "I've stood for one ghost yarn today; but I'm not going to be fooled with another. It's one thing to pay attention to a—well—young Queen in trouble that way, but quite different when it comes to a jungle priest. If he expects to get money out of me on any tiger ghost story, he's mistaken. I don't take a particle of stock in his tiger ghost—just don't believe in it!"

"Very well, Sahib," submissively acquiesced Durga Deb. "It is as the Sahib says. If the Sahib pleases, there is no tiger ghost and all who say there is are liars."

"Yes," added Foster on a second thought born of experience, "and if that priest puts any such foolish notion into the heads of my coolies, I'll shoot lightning into his old shanty of a temple. You can tell him that and anything else along the same line that occurs to your exuberant fancy, Durga Deb."

"The Sahib always speaks with wisdom. Whenever he opens his mouth his servant listens. It shall be as the Sahib orders."

In spite of Durga Deb's protestation, Foster felt there might be some mischief on foot. There had been trouble before over the perquisites of the water god with the same ecclesiastical authority, arrested only by Foster's peremptory firmness. So he went among the coolies to ascertain if the jungle god priest had been attempting to frighten them from their work; but, meeting with assurances to the contrary, he thought he might have done the priest an injustice. But early next morning he changed his opinion, for a short space at least.

WHEN he called for Durga Deb to bring his early breakfast, there was no response. When he stepped outside his tent, a single look showed him that the camp was deserted. It was then he swore he would have the scalp of the jungle god priest. A moment later a glance in another direction seemed to raise the scalp on his own head perceptibly. Through the mist that clung to the land surface he saw a gray object sitting on its haunches under a clump of bamboos where the jungle swept round and encroached upon the compound.

To Foster's recently awakened vision the gray object presented the appearance of a tiger ghost of gigantic proportions. The tiger ghost, if such it was, was taking a leisurely survey of Foster's tent from a distance of about fifty paces. Presently a shaft of sunlight sweeping aside the mist shone full upon the pale yellow body with its velvet-like bands and the black and white marks on the head of a very real tiger. Foster's jaw dropped a little, as any man's may on a first introduction to the terror of the jungle entirely at liberty; but he stood his ground, as instinct warned him that any movement of retreat might bring the beast down on his defenseless position.

So they maintained their relative positions for a full minute, Foster taking in the probable offensive power of the tiger, and the tiger looking over Foster somewhat disdainfully. Then the tiger rose, walked obliquely across the line of Foster's sight, took the jungle path leading up toward the powerhouse, and disappeared.

Foster gave expression to a deep outpouring of breath. It had been rather a trying experience. "Great Scott!" he exclaimed, pulling himself together. "That wasn't any ghost tiger. If the jungle priest referred to him he was away off in his estimate of muscle and sinew. Wonder if it was merely a passing call, or if Stripes intends to locate in this neighborhood?"

Foster retreated to his tent, and felt more comfortable when he had secured his pistol, though he understood it would avail little if the tiger decided to return. Then he went out to the servants' quarters in the rear. Except that he found the chickens huddled in a corner of the kitchen tent when they ought to have been out hunting the early worm, the place had evidently been abandoned overnight. It was, of course, as the Sahib pleased; but his faithful servants had not intended to take chances with any kind of tiger around.

Presently from some retreat the camp watchdog crept up and sniffed the ground at Foster's feet. Letting his eyes fall, Foster saw in the moist soil the large square pugs of the tiger's paws. Stripes had been on a tour of closer inspection than Foster quite liked the idea of being repeated. It would be comparatively easy to stretch a giant paw under the canvas—with the rest left to imagination.

THE eyes of the Sahib have seen," came a voice at his elbow.

Foster, startled for the moment, wheeled round, to find a shrinking group of servants, his butler, cook, sweeper, water carrier, dog boy, etc. They salaamed low and protested in chorus that nothing would have induced them to return from a place of better security than a tent but anxiety regarding the American Sahib's safety. In reality their courage had been warmed up by the sun, and as they are likely to do appeared from nowhere in particular.

"That is a ghost tiger," said Durga Deb, pointing to the pugs in the earth.

"Ai! Ai! Ai!" solemnly acquiesced the others. "Oh, Sahib! Be very careful, sir, that you do not set your foot in the track of a ghost tiger. The Sahib will observe that the feet turn inward."

Foster glanced again at the pugs and took notice; but shook his head. "Whether they turn inward or not," he remarked, "there was no ghost about the tiger I saw."

"Sahib, that tiger will come back for his rent!"

"Not if I know it!" Foster declared emphatically.

But, as this was a matter requiring serious thought, Foster wisely ordered his early breakfast. During breakfast he called in his servants and learned as much as they knew about the ways and habits of tigers, ghostly or otherwise. In a land of ghosts, from little children whose pitiful cries lure you into a bottomless well, to the Brahman riding a white bull on the Grand Trunk Road, whom it is not good for you to meet, it would have been useless for Foster to argue his disbelief in a ghost tiger. Besides if, as is well known, there are camel ghosts, why not the ghost of a tiger?

But from this source he was given to understand that the tiger's favorite hours for stalking were at sunrise and sunset, and that they almost invariably

switchboard for the powerhouse line, and from it ran another line out into the compound.

This work took up the best part of the day, and when completed he requisitioned a bullock from a neighboring farmer. Having tethered the bullock on a short rope to a stake in the compound, he twisted some metal into a collar round the beast's neck, and attached the line from the switchboard to the collar. Then he watered and salted the ground round the bullock.

Foster surveyed the completion of these proceedings with satisfaction. "If old Stripes only does come around," he smiled, "ghost or ordinary tiger, I guess there will be something doing."

He went back to the powerhouse to make sure that the machinery was running smoothly, locked up the place securely, and sent the coolies away. He then returned to close up the tents in the compound and to station his servants in concealment within hailing distance. Thrusting his pistol into a pocket more as a moral protective stimulant than with any idea of using it effectively, he lay down on the platform in the clump of bamboos and waited. He had selected that position as less cramping on a long watch and more secure from discovery.

LATE afternoon was drawing into evening; but the sun's rays slanting through leaves and twigs made their declining strength uncomfortably manifest on Foster's back. In a tamarind tree nearby a family of parrots discussed the local bird gossip, while farther off a colony of monkeys broke into loud chatter. Presently a couple of jackals slunk down the path from the powerhouse and, halting on the threshold of the compound, darted sharp glances in all directions as if reconnoitering. At the end of the wire the bullock placidly chewed some fodder unsuspectingly.

Foster kept his gaze fixed on the jungle path as the direction from which Stripes might be expected. With one hand on the switchboard, the knowledge of the force at his command made his position more calmly tenable. To the keen pitch of his ears came the subdued drone of the machinery. Soon a little cloud of white dust swept down the jungle path, and Foster's fingers tightened on the switch. But the dust cloud dissolved into nothingness. Apparently created and maintained by its own volition, no current of air followed. The pair of jackals, emboldened to further adventure, trotted cautiously toward the closed tents. Gradually the shadows began to lengthen across the compound, and a hot red glow suffused all objects.

It was certainly a nerve testing situation, and though Foster had never before particularly yearned to see a tiger in its native haunts, he began to wish Stripes would put in an appearance. By way of relaxation he watched the pair of jackals. After rambling in and out among the tents their actions had become significant. Once or twice they moved toward the tethered bullock, and then darted back with suspicious glances cast over their shoulders. Presently they sat on their haunches and sniffed the air in the direction of Foster's ambush. He judged that they had discovered his presence in the clump of bamboos.

In a little while a peahen rose with a loud clatter from somewhere in Foster's vicinity. The jackals promptly turned tail and vanished. At the same moment the parrots ceased their chatter in the tamarind tree, the monkeys fell into silence, and an ominous stillness succeeded. At the end of his short rope the bullock stopped chewing and stared with frightened eyes toward the bamboo clump. The rhythmic pulsations of the electric machinery rose a trifle more distinctly. Foster, judging that such signs betokened the approach of Stripes, again fixed his gaze intently on the jungle path.

SUDDENLY he was startled by a deep growling cough in his rear. Then followed a crunching of the dry leaves as of soft but heavy footfalls and the suggestion of a large body stealthily parting the undergrowth. The bullock backed away to the end of its rope and stood in a posture of pitiful helplessness. All animate creatures seemed to be holding their breaths in suspense at the coming of the Lord of the Jungle. Again the cough sounded nearer, and Foster's blood ran cold as he realized that the tiger had made a detour of the compound and entered the bamboo clump a few yards back of his feet.

It is one thing to set a trap for a tiger expecting him to walk into it according to a nice calculation, and quite another to find that you have practically offered yourself as an alternative bait, with no chance at all of taking the offensive or beating a retreat. Since there was no other course, Foster lay still on his narrow insecure platform, as silent as the

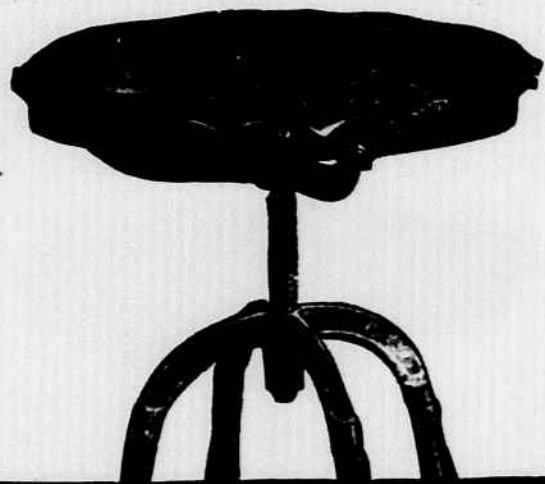
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She Quivered with Emotion as She Gazed at the Peculiar Scar.

retreated to their lairs in the daytime. Consequently nothing could be done with Stripes until evening. As Foster smoked a cheroot, he was compelled to lay at one side any plan for shooting the tiger, on account of want of practice with a rifle. It is not good policy to miss a vital spot when out gunning for a tiger. Neither was it possible to poison the beast, for lack of a sufficient dose of strychnine. How in the world then was he to rid himself of such an unwelcome visitor?

IN the smoke he drew in from the cheroot seemed to come an inspiration that sent him hurrying up to the powerhouse. First of all he tested the generators. Then he called his coolies and set them to work in activity approaching a hustle. His main purpose was to run a line through the treetops from the powerhouse to the clump of bamboos where Stripes had appeared in the morning. In the meantime he built a narrow platform in the clump of bamboos raised about seven feet from the ground and long enough to recline upon at full length. From that position within easy reach of his hand he fixed a



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plaudits and cries for "More!" he lit a long thin cigar and smoked furiously. Passing Joan's berth later, he knocked.

"Who is it?" she asked.
"I, the Humming Bee."
"Leave me to-night, Felix. I must think."
"Better sleep. Thinking creates wrinkles. Look on me as a horrible example."
He went away, bassooning some lively

melody, but grinning the while, and if his thoughts took shape they would have run:

"The struggle has ended ere it began, sweet maid. You are in love; but have not yet waked up to that astonishing fact. Now, why did the good God give me a big heart and a small head and a twisted spine? Why not have made me either a man or an imp?"

To be continued next Sunday.

The Black Magic

Continued from page 7

monkeys and the parrots, and with an equal desire to be passed by unnoticed. But of that there remained so much doubt that the perspiration came in big drops from his forehead.

Again that ominous cough, this time a few paces to one side of Foster's ambush. If it would have been suicidal to move a foot, Foster could not restrain an impulse to turn his head slightly and glance toward the spot whence the last sound came. Between a few intervening bamboo canes Foster's eyes fell upon the huge striped head and the powerful neck and shoulders of the great cat slowly moving forward. How much Foster devoutly hoped the tiger would keep on moving might be difficult to estimate, because a single leap could easily have landed the beast on Foster's frail perch. In that situation he scarcely dared to raise an eyelid or draw his breath. His earnest desire was to simulate the condition of death so well that the jaws of reality might not close upon him. The tiger paused to thrust aside some underbrush, and Foster's heart stopped beating. The tiger's head came slowly round in Foster's direction; but fortunately it was not lifted.

In a few seconds which seemed as many hours Foster found himself looking upon the strong hind flanks of the tiger, as the beast again crept onward with that sinister crunching of the leaves. That Stripes had passed was some relief. At the edge of the bamboo clump the tiger crouched low and halted, with body and head set in the direction of the terror-stricken, waiting bullock and rustling the dead leaves with a gentle sweeping motion of the long supple tail.

If Foster had possessed a million dollars, he would gladly have relinquished every penny for the tiger to end the suspense by some action; but, like a true villain, Stripes seemed to enjoy feasting his eyes upon the sight of his hapless prey. How long the tiger intended to prolong the bullock's agony, or for what length of time Foster could have maintained his tense position without movement and discovery, may be left open questions, because the tiger's final action was quickened by an unexpected circumstance.

FROM his slightly elevated position Foster beheld a small procession enter the compound, apparently with the intention of crossing and taking the jungle path. In the van marched some red turbaned servants of the Rani; then came a curtained litter gilded and decorated with figures of strange gods, the Rani's *munshi*, and a scattering of attendants.

Headless of the consequences to himself, a shout of warning rose from Foster's chest; but before it had passed his lips the yellow body of the tiger shot from the bamboo clump with that lightning upward course which ends by seizing the victim by the throat, hurling it backward, and snapping the vertebra. In Foster's excitement the frail platform gave way under him and he was tumbled to the ground.

At the same moment a roar seemed to shake the foundations of the earth; but ended in a long drawn out half snarl, half mighty groan, which brought Foster scrambling to his feet. As he parted the bamboo canes, wild consternation had taken possession of the Rani's attendants, and the huge bulk of the tiger was rolling over in titanic convulsions.

A cry of relief went up from Foster's lungs. It was clear that he had mechanically thrown the switch in falling and shot over two thousand volts into the tiger the moment its teeth fastened on the metal collar of the bullock. Grasping his pistol, he rushed forward to warn back a woman's slender figure, which had sprung from the litter and was moving toward the tiger with a dagger clutched in one hand.

OF the next few moments of confused excitement Foster has not a very clear recollection. He believes he needlessly emptied his revolver into the prostrate body of the tiger, with its jaws fastened in the bullock's throat. When the brute's power for mischief was clearly ended, he hastened to the bamboo clump to switch off the current. When he returned to the scene of action, the woman was standing over the tiger. With eyes dilated, her nostrils were quivering from emotion.

As her veil had fallen from her face, Foster gained a privilege seldom, almost never, falling to the lot of an Occidental. He looked upon the features of one of the Queens of India. From her voice behind the curtain he had pictured a considerable degree of beauty in its owner; but in the delicate lines of the oval contour, the soft complexion flushed with excitement, flashing eyes, and proud lips, any ideal he may have formed was far surpassed in the reality. Classic drapery light as air and of a subtle shade of heliotrope emphasized the graceful symmetry of her form.

But above and beyond all other feelings that swept in upon Foster was an impression of the beauty and loveliness of a far off age, such as one conjures to the mind when dwelling upon the romances of antiquity; for this Queen could trace an unbroken lineage to a period when the royal families of Europe were prob-

ably herders of cattle. It was like meeting some such character as Cleopatra returned to life, very real, natural, and attractive, but differing from any other woman he had set eyes upon. Other women did not wear saris embroidered with pearls, suspend a gleaming pear shaped emerald above the arch of an eyebrow, and carry a pretty though effective looking protective weapon.

Presently she bent downward and pointed to the forehead of the tiger with her dagger. Foster, following her direction, distinctly saw what resembled a burnt scar running diagonally across the black marks. It gave to the beast an added sinister expression, almost fiendish in intensity.

THE Rani drew herself up and turned upon Foster a look of significant feeling. It was certainly a remarkable coincidence. Foster was about to observe something to that effect, when, the Rani's attendants approaching, she hastily veiled her face. Amid a general clatter of tongues she permitted herself to be escorted back to her litter. When screened by the curtains, she summoned the *munshi* and spoke with him for some minutes.

Then the *munshi* came toward Foster holding something in his hand which glittered. As he drew near Foster perceived it was a bracelet thickly incrustated with jewels.

"The Rani," said the *munshi*, "was on her way to consult the priest of the Jungle Temple, having heard that a ghost tiger had come into the neighborhood. Then that which was pre-ordained happened. The American Sahib was destined to deliver her from the power of the Black Magic. It is clearly proved by the mark of Satan on the tiger's forehead. Therefore she sends this bracelet as a token of her gratitude. That, the American Sahib must know, is the highest honor a Rajput Princess can bestow. Emperors and Kings have striven for that honor, Sahib. Equally to be desired as a hand in marriage is this custom of the Rajputs, because for ages it has been so that death alone can sever the purely chivalrous sentiment uniting the giver and receiver of the bracelet. Foster Sahib is not likely to meet another man who in this manner has come into possession of a Rajput Queen's bracelet."

When the procession moved away a white hand thrust the curtains of the litter aside. For a brief moment Foster caught a glimpse of the Rani's beautiful face turned upon him. As the best response he could make, Foster stood with uncovered head while the Queen's litter passed away in the silver light of the rising moon.

SO far as Foster knows, the old Raja did not return to carry out his oath, and he doesn't believe in the Black Magic. Still, he has never quite satisfied himself regarding that burnt scar on Stripes' forehead, as you may see for yourself in the handsome skin rug that lies before his hearth.

GREAT TRADE SECRETS

ONE of the profoundest trade secrets in the world is that pertaining to the manufacture of ink used in printing Uncle Sam's banknotes. This ink is invaluable for Government purposes. Indeed, it cannot do without it, inasmuch as it is the only known variety that will "take" on the peculiar surface of the paper employed for the notes; a paper that is, to a great extent, another carefully guarded secret. These considerations are a great safeguard against counterfeiting; for would be forgers are confronted with the task of simulating not only unique paper itself, but unique ink as well. It is said that the Government pays one man, the sole possessor of the formula for making this ink, some fifty thousand dollars annually.

Another invaluable trade secret in the matter of banknote paper is preserved by the Bank of England. This secret is known only to the governor of the bank and to three other persons, and about all the outside world knows of the paper is that charred husks and Rhenish vines—a strangely incongruous combination—are among the ingredients.

Of private trade secrets perhaps the most famous is that of the manufacture by the Chartreuse monks of the famous liqueur that bears their name. This liqueur is said to be flavored with more than fifty varieties of seeds and flowers. An annual profit of over seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars is netted to the religious order, which, it is understood, is distributed among various religious and charitable institutions. An interesting story is that the Rothschild family once offered a representative of the monks five million dollars for the secret; but the offer was promptly declined.

The Benedictine monks possess a trade secret, also pertaining to the manufacture of a liqueur, scarcely less profitable than that of Chartreuse. The recipe for making it was lost during the French Revolution, and for awhile its manufacture ceased. The priceless recipe turned up again, however, and the fortunate monks resumed their lucrative industry.



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